

1 Peter 1:6-7

Heaviness and Heaven

Review of 1 Peter:

The Epistle of First Peter was written to encourage and strengthen the Jewish believers scattered throughout the northeastern part of Asia Minor, areas now called *Turkey*.

Peter wrote early on the subject of joy and the believer because his readers needed the reminder and the encouragement as they faced severe persecution.

From vv. 3 and 4 we came to understand:

1. God is great in mercy.
2. God causes us to be born again to a lively or living hope.
3. God raised Jesus Christ from the dead.
4. God promises an inheritance to those whom He fathers.
5. (And) God is keeping/protecting that inheritance so that it will never, ever perish or soil or fade.

From v. 5 we realize:

1. Our inheritance is eternal, and so is our security.
2. We are guarded and protected by God's power.
3. Through faith we enable God's power to be effective in our lives.
4. Our inheritance is ready to be revealed at the return of Christ

Philips writes on the previous passage: *God does not just stand back after [we are] born again. He uses his divine power to protect us all through life for the salvation ready to be revealed.*

A useful outline

Salutation (1:1-2)

I. Suffering Christians Should Remember Their Great Salvation (1:3–2:10)

- A. The Certainty of Their Salvation (1:3-12)
 1. It is preserved by the power of God (1:3-5)
 2. It is proven by the trials from God (1:6-9)
 3. It was predicted by the prophets of God (1:10-12)

v. 6 *Wherein ye greatly rejoice*

In light of the blessedness of this salvation, no earthly difficulties should have diminished their joy (cf. Hab. 3:17-18; Matt. 5:11-12; James 1:2).

v.6 *Wherein* = that new relationship with God previously spoken of in vv.2-5

Mac: **Wherein** refers back to the preceding passage (1 Peter 1:2, 3-5), which detailed the first great truth that brings Christians joy, specifically the inheritance that is kept/guarded/protected for you.

v.6 ye greatly rejoice: properly to jump for joy, that is, exult: - be (exceeding) glad, with exceeding joy
Mac: *Greatly rejoice* is an intense, expressive term that means to be supremely and abundantly happy—a happiness that is not tentative nor based on circumstances or superficial feelings.

Furthermore, since Peter put it in the present tense, it conveys the notion of continual joy and happiness.

Spurgeon: This paradox has been known and felt by many of the Lord's children, and it is far from being the greatest paradox of the Christian life. Of all riddles, the greatest riddle is a Christian man. What wonder, then, beloved, if the Christian man be a paradox himself, that his condition should be a paradox too!

JP: Christianity is a life of painful joy. The Old Testament commands us to delight ourselves in the Lord (Psalm 37:4) and to serve the Lord with gladness (Psalm 100:2) and to rejoice before the Lord our God in all our undertakings (Deuteronomy 12:18).

And so it is with the other writers of Scripture. The message is: Christianity is a life of tremendous and abiding joy.

Now Peter picks up this great theme in verse six and shows us two great reasons for joy, and in the process, why it is painful joy.

Four sides of the trials God uses to prove believer's faith:

First, he declares that their temptations are

I. v.6 ...*now for a season...*

Season: puny (in extent, degree, number, duration or value); somewhat: - brief [-ly], few, (a) little, + long, a season, short, small, a while.

JP: Brief is very relative. Compared to others and compared to a lifetime on earth, your distresses may last a long time not a little. But compared to eternity--compared to the inheritance imperishable, undefiled, unfading kept in heaven for you--they are only for a little time. Compared to the length and greatness of the future God has planned for you, all the distresses of this life are very little in deed.

Second, trials come

II. v.6 ...*if need be...*

That is, when they serve a purpose in believers' lives. God uses troubles to humble believers (Deut. 8:3; 2 Cor. 12:7-10), wean them away from worldly things and point them toward heaven (John 16:33; Rev. 14:13; cf. Job 19:25-26), teach them to value God's blessing as opposed to life's pain (1 Peter 4:13; Rom. 8:17-18), enable them to help others (2 Cor. 1:3-7; Heb. 13:3), chasten them for their sins (1 Cor. 11:30; cf. Job 5:17; Luke 15:16-18; Heb. 12:5-12), and to help strengthen spiritual character (Rom. 5:3; 2 Thess. 1:4-6; James 1:2-4; 5:11).

Third, Peter with the term

III. *ye are in heaviness...*

Heaviness: to distress; to be sad: - cause grief, grieve, (be) sorrow (-ful), be (make) sorry. Refers not only to physical pain, but also to mental anguish, including sadness, sorrow, disappointment, and anxiety. By God's design, trouble needs to be painful in order to refine believers for greater spiritual usefulness.

JP: In God's design for our trials there is a place for real, authentic grieving and distress. But this experience is fundamentally altered from the way the world experiences these things. We see a design in it all.

Reasons for the Christian's *heaviness* [Spurgeon]:

A. In the first place, **if we were not in heaviness during our troubles we should not be like our Covenant Head — Christ Jesus.**

B. Yet again; if the Christian did not sometimes suffer heaviness **he would begin to grow too proud**, and think too much of himself, and become too great in his own esteem.

C. Another reason for this discipline is, I think, that in heaviness **we often learn lessons that we never could attain elsewhere**.

D. And yet again; this heaviness is of essential use to a Christian, **if he would do good to others**. Those who have been in the chamber of affliction know how to comfort those who are there.

Fourth, the apostle notes in verse 6 that Christians experience

IV. v.6 ...*manifold temptations...*

Manifold: various in character: - divers, manifold.

Temptations: a putting to proof (by experiment [of good], discipline or provocation); by implication adversity: - temptation, X try.

JP: The point is that the variety of ways that we experience distress is great. So in God's design it is "need [-ed]," he says, to use a wide range of trials. There is not just one kind of trial in view here. God paints with many colors.

This perspective on trouble not only does not diminish joy but actually produces triumphant joy, since the experience validates Christians' faith.

v.7 *That the trial of your faith...*

Trial: a *testing*; by implication *trustworthiness*: - trial, trying.

Robertson's: the *proof of your faith*

Faith: *persuasion*, moral conviction (of *religious* truth, or the truthfulness of God), especially *reliance* upon Christ for salvation; *constancy* in such profession; - assurance, belief, believe, faith, fidelity.

When the gold is ready to be remolded, the impurities have also perished in the flame. Trials and difficulties may assail the life of a believer, but they also have the ability to identify and banish those impurities which might impair growth and service. This is the first of several passages in the epistle which view suffering as essentially fruitful and necessary.

Mac: **Trial** was used to describe the assaying of metal. The assaying process discovers a metal's purity and determines its true content and worth after all impurities have been smelted away. By analogy, God tests the believer's faith to reveal its genuineness (cf. Job 23:10). He does this not because He needs to discover who is a true believer, but so that believers will gain joy and confidence in their proven faith.

v.7 ...*being much more precious...*

Precious: valuable, that is, costly, or honored, esteemed, or beloved: - dear, honourable, (more, most) precious, had in reputation.

v.7 ...*than of gold that perisheth...*

Gold: a golden article, that is, gold plating, ornament, or coin: - gold.

Perisheth: to destroy fully - destroy, die, lose, mar, perish.

Mac: Peter used **gold** in his analogy because it was the most precious and highly prized of all metals (Ezra 8:27; Job 28:15-16; Ps. 19:10; cf. 2 Kings 23:35; Matt. 2:11), and in ancient times it was the basis for most monetary transactions (cf. Ezek. 27:22; Matt. 10:9). Just as **fire** separates gold from useless dross, so God uses suffering and trials to separate true faith from superficial profession. But even though gold can be purified when **tried/tested by fire**, it is **perishable** (cf. James 5:3). However, proven faith is eternal, making it **more precious than...gold**.

v.7 ...*though it be tried with fire...*

Tried: to *test*; by implication to *approve*: - allow, discern, examine, (ap-) prove, try.

Fire: "fire" (literally or figuratively, specifically lightning): - fiery, fire.

These impurities in our faith hinder our fullest experience of the goodness and greatness of God. So God designs to refine our faith with the fires of trial and distress. His aim is that our faith be more pure and more genuine. That is, that it be more utterly dependent on him and not on things and other persons for our joy.

God took away from Paul an ordinary prop of safety and let him feel an almost overwhelming sense of human abandonment. This was the fire of 1 Peter 1:7. Not because God didn't love Paul. But because God saw Paul's faith as gold worthy of refining.

v.7 ... might be found unto praise and honour and glory...

Might be found: find, get, obtain, perceive, see.

Praise: laudation; concretely a commendable thing: - praise.

Honor: a value, that is, money paid, or (concretely and collectively) valuables; by analogy esteem (especially of the highest degree), or the dignity itself: - honour, precious, price, some.

Mac: Honor likely refers to the rewards God will give to believers because of their service to Him. Paul explains this in more detail in 1 Corinthians 3:10-15.

Glory: glory (as very apparent), in a wide application (literally or figuratively, objectively or subjectively): - dignity, glory (-ious), honour, praise, worship.

v.7 ...at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

Appearing: disclosure: - appearing, coming, lighten, manifestation, be revealed, revelation.

None of these passages, however, indicate that believers have to wait until Christ's return before He finds their faith genuine. The reality of their faith is already validated by their faithful enduring of trials and testings. It is an amazing truth that when Jesus returns for His own, not only will they joyfully serve Him, but also He will graciously serve and honor them.

So What???

Do you possess this great salvation?

Are you rejoicing in the great salvation?

Do you recognize your trials as refining your faith?

Are you submitting to the Refiner's fire?

Are you counting on Christ's reward to satisfy the heaviness of your trials?

Are you looking for Christ's appearing?